INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS
OFFICE OF SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING

"Smeda Rmeda Who Destroys Her Luck with Her Own Hands": A Jewish Moroccan Cinderella Tale in an Israeli Context

Author(s): Haya Bar-Itzhak

Source: *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol. 30, No. 2/3 (May - Dec., 1993), pp. 93-125
Published by: Indiana University Press
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3814312
Accessed: 22-06-2016 16:04 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at http://about.jstor.org/terms

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Indiana University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Folklore Research*

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Haya Bar-Itzhak

"Smeda Rmeda Who Destroys Her Luck with Her Own Hands": A Jewish Moroccan Cinderella Tale in an Israeli Context

The various research methods that have evolved since the beginning of the study of folklore have been intended as tools of interpretation, to facilitate a better understanding of the subject under study. In this article I intend to mobilize a number of research approaches for the study of the Cinderella narrative of the Moroccan Jews. I will show how different research approaches can assist in the interpretation of the narrative and comment on the points of contact among various approaches.

The storytelling event and the performance-centered text

According to Richard Bauman, a contextual and ethnographic approach to narrative enables discovery of "the individual, social, and cultural factors that give it shape and meaning in the conduct of social life" (1986:2). Following Bauman's suggestions, I would like to preface detailed analysis of one particular storytelling event with a brief description of its social and cultural context.

The Smeda Rmeda narrative which follows was narrated by storyteller Freha Hafutah, a ninety-year-old blind woman who comes from the Atlas mountains in Morocco. She came to Israel with her four children in 1955. Freha has had no formal education and claims that her wisdom comes from the folk narratives she heard when she was young in Morocco. Her narrative was recorded on our first meeting when I came to her house with a group of researchers and students (all women).

When we entered Freha's home, she was resting on a bed in the hallway. Her daughter had gone to the market, but returned as we were recording the first narrative and sat down to join the listeners. In the next room, which served as the living room, a man was lying on a sofa. He introduced himself

Journal of Folklore Research, Vol. 30, No. 2/3, 1993
Copyright © 1993 by the Folklore Institute, Indiana University

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Fig. 1 The storyteller Freha Hafutah and her daughter in the yard of Freha's home, with Avraham in the background.

as Avraham, and when we asked Freha to narrate, we asked him if he, too, knew some narratives. He replied, "I don't listen to the nonsense of old people," and left the room. We then sat in a circle around Freha, who began to speak. Her narrative was humorous and made everybody laugh. During the course of the storytelling, Avraham returned and started walking amongst the listeners, and as the narrative drew to a close he responded together with us. When it was over, he served us coffee. It was to this audience of researchers, students, and family members that the narrator addressed herself when she told the Smeda Rmeda narrative.

In creating a performance-centered text, I have been inspired by Elizabeth Fine's suggestions (1984). However, the uniqueness of the event has necessitated some changes. As Fine herself claims, "Each folklore performance, as a unique artistic experience, presents unique problems, which cannot be solved by a mechanical application of rules. . . . [I]t seems dubious that a universal application or text style will meet the demands of the many and varied folklore performances" (1984:149–50). As the following pages illustrate, I have adhered to Fine's suggested format in some ways and altered it in others.

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Vocal Characterizer	**Smeda Rmeda**[1]	*Kinesic Features*
piano larghetto	Let me tell you, God was everywhere, but he was in our hands and in the listeners' hands. Our house is silk and cotton, but the house of the Moslems will be ruined and all the Moslems will be destroyed in a single day.	*holds the hand of the nearest listener*
accelerando	There was, let me tell you, a certain woman. She had just one son and one daughter—that was all she had in the whole world. The girl used to go out with her girl friends every day: she went to school with them, combed her hair with them, and played and laughed with them.	
a tempo	One of God's fine days the neighbor—the mother of the girls —said to her:	
harsh	"Listen, why are you always hanging around my daughters? Your mother does not pay any attention to you, and does not love you, and does	
seductive	nothing for you. You must kill her."	
childish	She said to her: "How do you want me to kill my mother? What for?"	
harsh	She said to her: "What should you do? Get a snake and put it in the butter jar."	
conversational	(Let's get on with the story, dear friends.[2])	*moves hand in a circle around audience*
childish	So the girl said to her: "How am I to kill my mother?"	
harsh	She said to her: "Get the snake and put it in the butter jar and pretend you are sick and go to sleep, and tell her: 'Mother, cook a little Barkuksh[3] for me.'	
	"And when she says: 'Rise, oh her brother, go and get the butter,' tell her: 'His hands are not clean.'	
	"'Rise, oh her father, go.'	
	"Tell her: 'His hands are hairy.'	
	"'Rise, oh the servant, go.'	
	"Tell her: 'Her hands are black. Mother, you go.'	
	"And when she goes and gets the butter, she	

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

dies. And then your father will come and ask me to be his wife, and you will be the dearest person in the whole world to me."

Good. This is what the poor girl did.

childish She went to her mother and told her: "I am not going to school today."

obliging "Why, my daughter?"

"I am sick, mother, sick."

She said to her: "My daughter, what can I do for you?"

She said to her: "I want to sleep."

She slept. And the poor mother made her bed lovingly and put her to bed.

devotedly "I am your Kappara,"[4] she said. "What can I do to help you?"

She said to her: "Just cook a little Barkuksh for me."

secretive And she had already put the viper into the opening of the butter jar—

conversational (May God spare us such misfortune.) *turns to the listeners*

The daughter was asleep and the mother wanted to cook some Barkuksh for her.

"Rise, oh her brother. Go and get the butter."

She said to him: "Your hands are dirty."

"Rise, oh the servant, and go."

"Her hands are black."

"Rise, oh her father, and go."

commanding "No, father's hands are hairy. Mother, you go. Wash your hands."

emphatic Good. She got up from her chair, washed her hands, the poor woman—

conversational (May you not see misfortune.) *turns to the listeners*
The moment she stepped into that cursed cellar to get the butter the viper attacked her. The mother died.

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

conversational	(May you not see misfortune and may you not see evil.) She died, the poor woman.	*turns to the listeners*
adagio	Good, seven days went by, eight days, time went by.	*moves her hand in a circle*
	(Now don't you say anything![5])	*turns to the listeners*
accelerando	One day the girl rose and went out with the daughters of the neighbor as usual. She goes out with them, washes, takes a shower, and gets dressed.	
harsh tempting	She said to her: "Now that your father is alone with you and your brother, go and tell him, tell your father to marry me, and you will be the dearest person in the world to me."	
pleading	Good, she went to her father, and said to him: "Father, the kind of life we are leading is not good. Will you remain without a wife? There is our neighbor whom we love and who is a close friend. Marry her, and she will take care of us."	
	He said to her: "Oh my daughter, there is no time for a wedding."	*gesture of rejection*
	She implored him, the poor girl, and he married her. He married the neighbor.	
	Now don't you say anything! What did her seven daughters do? They stood above the father's beard, her father, and relieved themselves.	
apologetic	(If you will excuse me.) They soiled his beard and his clothes.	*turns to the listeners*
	The poor man rose: "Oh my God, who did this to me?"	
forceful and harsh	She said to him: "I weep for you and your daughter."	*waves hand from inside outside*
apologetic	(Excuse me.) "Yes, she is the one that did what she wanted to do."	*turns to the listeners*
	"By God, my daughter would never do such a thing, neither she nor her brother. Don't you dare to say a thing like that."	
harsh	She said to him: "What can we do to her? Let's lock her up in the baking room for the night, and you will see what she does."	*shakes head*
	They grabbed her and locked her up there for the night. The next morning, the father woke up in the same state as before, and they did this to him day after day.	

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

secretive The girls would climb up to the opening in the roof, above the baking room, and they would do it.

protesting The neighbors protested: "By God, oh my daughter, do you think there is something wrong with the daughter of your husband? She leaves the baking room, relieves herself, and goes back. And they lock her up in the room, the poor girl."

(Don't you say anything, my dear friends!) *turns to the listeners*
Time passes, and the king's son announces that he is looking for a wife.

Nobody stayed indoors, not even drummers, buglers, or people who scour their faces with red-hot loam.[6]

(Don't you say anything, my dear!) *turns to the listeners*
The father of the unlucky girl who was locked in the room where the oven was wanted to go to Marrakesh.

The girls said to him: "Bring me a kerchief."

And another girl said: "A pair of slippers."

And another: "A dress."

He rose and said to his wife: "Oh my daughter, I will go to the orphan and ask her, too, what she wants."

harsh "Sit down, sit down," she told him. "You just sit down. She is covered all over with soot and excrement, you have no reason to go and ask her." *waves hand from below upwards*

decisive He said to her: "No. I will go to her, poor girl that she is."

He went to the baking room; he said to her: "I am going to Marrakesh to do some shopping. The king's son is looking for a wife, and my wife's daughters have told me what they want me to buy for them. Now what do you want me to buy for you?"

piano She said to him: "Father, just bring me seven nuts."

He said to her: "Very good, oh my daughter."

compassionate Good, he went to Marrakesh, and he bought ever so many things, but he forgot all about the seven nuts, the poor fellow. On the way home he remembered and went back to Marrakesh. What did he buy?

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

He bought a sack full of nuts. But the sack had a hole, and as he was walking the nuts fell to the ground, until there were only seven nuts left.

He returned; he brought her the nuts. He said to her: "Daughter, take these nuts. They are what God and your luck gave you. I brought you a sack, my daughter, and now—" *apologetic*

She said to him: "Father, give them to me. These seven nuts are enough to bring me luck—God will give me luck."

Good. She took the seven nuts and hid them.

The king was getting married. The stepmother (may you be spared such calamities) gathered together all kinds of grain and kernels—barley, wheat, corn—everything, mixed them in one room, and climbed up to the attic. *turns to the listeners* *conversational*

She said to her: "If you don't sort these out and put each grain where it belongs, I'll cut the ground beneath your feet." *harsh and highly pitched*

She sent the girl to that room. The girl cried—the moment she wiped one eye, the other eye started getting wet. *drying eyes*

She cracked the first nut. The nut was empty. *secretive*

She cracked the second nut. Samsam-Kamkam[7] came out. When the demon came out, her luck appeared. *spreads hands to show his size*

"Whatever you wish, my Lady—it will be done."

She said to him: "You see what a fix I am in, don't you?" *melancholy*

Good, he worked, sorting out everything. This goes here, in this sack, and that goes there, in that sack, and again in that sack. He sewed up the sacks and the room was spotless. Then he left and disappeared.

The poor girl cracked the third nut. Someone appeared—his horse was green, his headgear was green, his dress was green, and his sword was green to match.

He said to her: "Everything my Lady wants done will be done."

She said to him: "What my Lady wants done will be done? She wants to be taken from here to the king's wedding feast."

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

He took her, he carried her and turned her into a charming girl.

conversational (May God grant you this without a story and without a tale. May He grant you luck and may your husbands live.[8]) *turns to the listeners*

He turned her into a beautiful girl, carried her on his shoulders to the wedding-feast of the king's son.

mezza voce The girls are talking, and one of them says: "Mother, Mother, Mother, there is our sister. Here she comes."

The mother said to her: "Be quiet. That is the king's daughter." That is what the stepmother (may you be *turns to the listeners*
conversational spared such a calamity) says. "This," she says, "is a princess, that poor girl is locked up in a dark room."

Good. The people laugh and eat and drink. They laid a regal table for the girl, and she sits down, eats, drinks in the king's house, the house of the wedding.

Good. The wedding feast is over and the people left, and only she stayed. She cracked the first nut, found
allegro retardando it was rotten, the second was rotten, until she got to the last nut, the seventh. She cracked it, and someone on horseback appeared. The horse was red, the headdress was red to match.

"Whatever my Lady wants done will be done!" *bends head*

commanding "She wants to be taken away now, and she wants to be put in the baking room where her father's wife put her."

And the room is swept clean and there is nothing in it.

On her way back she lost one shoe. No other girl had a shoe like that, and who should find it but the king's son who was looking for a wife.

forte He said: "There is only one person whom this shoe will fit."

All the girls living in that country were brought to him—all of them. The shoe was too large for one girl, too small for another.

They rose and said: "We tried them all. There is only one girl left, she is hidden in a baking room.

He said to them: "Fetch her."

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

harsh The mother said to him: "This ought not to be done, sir. She is covered with excrement and soot, and what is she to be fetched for?"

commanding He said to them: "Get her, no matter what."

They brought her before him. He put the beautiful shoe on her foot, and it was a perfect fit.

He said to her: "You are the one I am going to marry."

sardonic "Sir, she does not suit you."

commanding He said to her: "This is the one I want."

Good, the servant girls carried her to the bath-house, gave her a dress that suited her, took her, bathed her, dressed her, and took her to the king's son.

He made a big wedding feast, and only God is great. (May God grant you and us such a feast.) *lifts hand, turns to the listeners*

(Don't you say anything!) The cursed woman, the father's wife, envied the girl. What did she do? The girl became pregnant, she was in an advanced stage of pregnancy, the poor girl.

harsh (Don't you say anything!) The father's wife rose and said to her daughters: "Rise, come, let us go and visit your sister and see what God has given her."

fortissimo (Envy!)

(Don't you say anything!) They went to see her, they checked them over and let them in.

Irony The people said: "Her father's wife and her daughters?

Good, the king's son let them in.

sardonic These women sit and say: "Come and we'll take you for a walk and cheer you up."

They took her for a walk and when they came to a well they threw her into it. In this well there lived lions and demons. They threw her into the well, and she fell onto the back of a lioness.

What did the sisters do? What did the mother do? She took her daughter, the one who was blind on one eye, put make-up on her face, dressed her, and sent her to the king's son.

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

The king's son came and talked to her, but she would not answer.

He said to her: "What happened to your eye?"

She said to him: "What happened to my eye? My brother grabbed me and gouged it out."

He said to her: "And what do you want me to do to your brother?"

whispering, hypocritically She said to him: "What do I want you to do to him? Let's slaughter him, put him into a loaf of bread and send him to our home."

sighing He said to her: "Alright, oh my daughter."

And the poor brother heard everything. He went to that well, weeping, the poor boy. He said to her:

singing

"My sister, oh my sister,
Oh daughter of our father and mother,
The ovens are heating up
And the knives are being sharpened."

The poor girl rose and replied:

singing

"My brother, oh my brother,
Oh son of our father and mother,
I am caught between the lion and the lioness,
And the king's sleeve is in my hands
And the daughters of the women have betrayed me."

(When I tell this tale, my tears flow. It is heart-rending.) *turns to the listeners*

emphatic Good, the king's son passed by and found the boy sitting next to the well, weeping, pleading with her, listening to her (tale of woe).

He said to him: "Say that again, my child. Repeat what you were saying. Say it again!" He sat there and said to her:

singing

"My sister, oh my sister,
Oh daughter of my father and mother,
The knives have been sharpened,
And the ovens are heating up."

And she rises and replies:

singing

"My brother, oh my brother,
Oh son of our father and mother,

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

I am caught between the lion and the lioness
And the sleeve of the king's son is in my hands
And the daughters of the woman have set me a trap."

(Don't you say anything, my dear!) He said to him: *turns to the listeners*
"Nice."

He went to the magicians, to the greatest of them
and said to him: "Oh master, a boy beside the well
is beseeching someone and somebody answers him
from inside the well, and I do not know who it is."

And the one-eyed one, her mother left her behind,
she is hiding in the palace and does not want to talk
to him.

The chief magician said to him: "Go ahead and
slaughter seven oxen, slaughter them and throw
them down that well."

Good. They did so.

accelerando "Oh, who did us this favor? Who did us this favor?
We'll return it."

The girl appeared, she got off the lioness' back and *lifts hand*
is holding the child.

compassionate She had given birth inside the well, the poor girl, inside the well.

She climbed from the well, holding her child, and
the king's son grabbed her.

"Oh my daughter, who did this?"

She said to him: "Come, come, come and be silent.
The knives that were sharpened for my brother
conversational (may I never see such a thing happen to my brothers) *turns to the listeners*
and the ovens that are heating up will be heated up
for the one-eyed girl, and she will be sent to our house
in a sack."

a tempo Good. He took her, he took the poor girl of whom
the women said: "Smeda Rmeda who destroyed her
good fortune with her own hands."

accelerando (Don't you say anything!) This is what they did:
they brought the blind girl, policemen took her,
slaughtered her and cut her up, and they lit the bread
oven and the meat oven, they took the blind head and
hid it and put chunks of flesh in layers between some

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

bread, and put it on a lame she-ass's back, and told the she-ass: "Go. Come back the way you started out."

fortissimo "Hurrah," the mother rejoiced. Her daughter sent her a present, her daughter sent her a present. She feels good.

She took the sack, and gave everybody some bread and a piece of meat. *moves hand as if dividing food*

"Here you are. Take some."

eulogizing (Don't you say anything, my dear friends.) 'Til she got to the head, and recognized her daughter's head. Then she wailed: "All those who have shared bread with me—come and shed tears with me."

conversational (May God give you luck, and may your children and your husbands live.) *turns to the listeners*

The girl was lucky, and they made a big wedding feast, but only God is great.

maestoso And the tale floats on the rivers.
And you, my friends, are cheerful givers.

Seven apples appeared, you ate one and another woman ate one, and yet another ate one, and Avraham took what was left. Good, I left Avraham out. Perhaps he married her. *bends fingers of the nearest listener*

From my knowledge of the Jewish Moroccan folktale, I was familiar with the concluding formula in which the storyteller hands out imaginary apples to the audience and expects gratitude in return. While transcribing the text, however, I came across the name Avraham, identified as one of the apple recipients. I found the concluding sentence particularly difficult to connect to the preceding narrative: "Perhaps he married her." Since the name Avraham did not appear among the characters of the story, we concluded that he was the man who was listening to the story with us. We knew very little about him from our brief encounter when we first arrived at Freha's home and learned of his ambivalent attitude towards her. Freha's intended message for him at the end of the story was a complete puzzle to us.

My additional meetings with the storyteller were a result of my desire to record more of her narratives, as well as to attempt to decode the message concealed in the concluding formula. At these other meetings, I learned additional details which finally made the decoding of the storytelling event and Freha's intended message possible.

It turns out that Freha lives in her daughter's home. The daughter's husband had divorced her because she was barren, which is legal according

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

to Halachic Law, after a period of ten childless years. The daughter currently lives with Avraham, although the couple is unmarried. This lifestyle, although acceptable in secular circles in Israel, is contrary to Jewish faith and in contrast to socially sanctified norms held by Moroccan Jews. The population of the small Israeli town in which the family lives was, at that time, a homogeneous one of Moroccan Jews, who greatly disapproved of this living arrangement.

Freha was caught in an unbearable vise. On the one hand, she disapproved of her daughter's actions, which were in total conflict with her own views and the social norms of her community. On the other hand, she was totally dependent on her daughter for her livelihood. It turned out that Freha had made her disapproval known to the couple, which strained her relationship with them. In fact, at the time of our visit and the recording, their communication had nearly reached a breaking point. Avraham's declaration that he was not interested in listening to old people's nonsense was a direct outcome of this situation.

It was under these circumstances that Freha directed her final message to only a small part of her audience: namely, her daughter and Avraham. However, it was the performance situation which arose, in which visitors were present and a humorous story was narrated, that motivated Avraham and Freha's daughter to join the event and become part of Freha's audience. In this setting Freha's status as storyteller was dominant, superseding the more problematic position she usually held in the household and which had interfered with communicative processes in the everyday life of this family. Those who would not usually listen to her became part of Freha's audience, and the presence of non-family members enabled her to overcome her fear of negative response from the couple. We are dealing with a type of situation that Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has called "performance as social interaction" (1975:106–30).

As we seek to determine how the Smeda Rmeda narrative functions in this specific storytelling situation, the question that arises is why Freha chose this narrative from her ample repertoire for the purpose of conveying her message. In order to answer this question, I will try to uncover the deeper structure and message of the narrative by analyzing its type, form, and structure. In the conclusion, I will come full circle, returning to a consideration of the storytelling context.

Both the typological and morphological analyses which follow are based on seven versions of the Smeda Rmeda narrative recorded from elderly female narrators in Israel, ranging in age from 80 to 90 at the time of recording. They narrated in Judeo-Arabic, interspersed with Hebrew words: some of the latter were of ancient Moroccan usage, while others were acquired after the narrators' immigration to Israel. The versions quoted in this article are translations of those recorded in the source language.[9]

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Typology

The Cinderella narrative is one of the most famous fairytales in the Western world, and as such it has merited numerous typological studies. Among the classics are the works of Marian Roalfe Cox (1893), the Swedish folklorist Anna Birgitta Rooth (1951), and Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson (1961). In the introduction to his collection of articles on Cinderella, Alan Dundes compares the kinds of sub-types established by Cox, Rooth, and Aarne and Thompson (1982). The versions of Smeda Rmeda to be considered here may be classified as Cox's Type A, Rooth's Type B, and Aarne-Thompson Types 510 and 510A.[10]

To begin, I would like to compare the Smeda Rmeda narratives with the international tale type developed by Aarne and Thompson and to focus on the versions relevant to the present study. Aarne and Thompson list five basic narrative components of type 510:

I. The Persecuted Heroine
II. Magic Help
III. Meeting the Prince
IV. Proof of Identity
V. Marriage with the Prince

In contrast to the international type, our narratives are characterized by an additional two episodes, which precede those identified by Aarne and Thompson. These may be defined as follows:

I. At the instigation of the woman who covets her father, the heroine kills her mother.

II. The heroine convinces her father that he should marry the woman who encouraged her to kill her mother.

In five of the seven versions under consideration, Smeda Rmeda kills her mother in accordance with the advice of her neighbor, a widow who wishes to marry her father. This murder is committed in conjunction with Smeda Rmeda's request for food. Sometimes, the food is festive and nourishing, such as Barkuksh, a dish cooked with butter that has to be fetched from the cellar. In other versions, the food requested is honey, which is also stored in a dark place. Sometimes the female storytellers tone down the murder: in one version, the neighbor conceals a snake in the cellar, and to cause her mother's death, Smeda Rmeda merely has to ask her to go down and fetch the butter.[11]

In those versions where the mother is not killed directly by Smeda Rmeda, the marriage of the father and the stepmother also results from the daughter's pleas. Generally, the father tries to reject these pleas. He says: "The year of worrying will pass, and the year of festivity will come." But he finally gives in

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

to his daughter's entreaties. This turn of events often prompts narrators' reference to the heroine as "Smeda Rmeda who destroys her luck with her own hands," a refrain which frequently recurs at critical points in the narrative.

These additional episodes, characteristic of Jewish Moroccan versions of the Cinderella tale, are not completely absent from the versions that were at the disposal of those who formulated the international tale type. Stith Thompson was familiar with the tale as it appears in Giambattiste Basile's *Il Pentamerone* of 1634, as Bruno Bettelheim has pointed out (1977: 242–44).[12] In Basile's version, the heroine's mother dies, and Zezolla's father remarries. The heroine believes that her stepmother is scheming to destroy her and tells her nurse about it. The nurse suggests that Zezolla should kill her stepmother by dropping the lid of a box on her head, and then convince the father to marry the nurse. Zezolla complies with the wishes of her nurse. Once married to the heroine's father, the nurse brings her six daughters to live in the household and starts maltreating Zezolla.

Basile's version does not find full expression in the international tale type. This is probably because the occurrence in this version of the two episodes discussed above (matricide and the father's remarriage) appeared to be unique among known versions. However, the majority of Jewish versions of the Cinderella narrative recorded in Asia and Africa are characterized by the presence of these episodes,[13] as are those known to be told in a Moslem context.[14] It is to be assumed that it is from the latter that this motif entered Jewish Moroccan storytelling.

For Bettelheim, Basile's version is significant because it clarifies the underlying Oedipal elements of the Cinderella narratives: the wish of a child to occupy the position of the parent of his/her own sex in the affections of the other parent, to be his beloved and even be a sex partner. Bettelheim uses this version to substantiate his thesis, as he certainly could have done with the Moroccan Jewish versions I have encountered. In fact, our versions contain additional references to Oedipal relations. In one, Smeda Rmeda's father is said to have "married [the neighbor], but on condition that his daughter should share his room because that was what she was used to." Another narrator says that the neighbor "married him, but the daughter would not let go of her father. She would sleep with him in his bed."

The two episodes characteristic of the Jewish Moroccan versions also contribute to the particular depiction of the character of the heroine. In the Jewish Moroccan versions, as in many European ones, the name of the heroine is associated with the ashes on which she must sit, symbol of her suffering: "Smeda Rmeda" suggests both fine flour, or semolina, and ashes.[15] Yet, while the international tale type begins with "The Persecuted Heroine," Smeda Rmeda is not portrayed as an innocent girl who suffers through no

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

fault of her own. The two additional episodes make it clear that it is the heroine's unethical actions that lead to her suffering and humiliation, as is represented by her banishment to the cook-room or bakery. These locations constitute focal points in the domestic routine of the household and may symbolize the girl's wish to return to her murdered mother. Similarly, the ashes on which Smeda Rmeda sits may be suggestive of mourning, but they are equally suggestive of purification—a metaphor for the redemptive process the girl is undergoing (Bettleheim 1977:253–55).

It is important that, in addition to the other accusations levelled at the girl, our version charges the heroine with relieving herself in an inappropriate manner and place. In one of the versions, for instance, we learn the following:

> One day—what did she do? The stepmother prepared an evening meal of chickpeas, to which she added handfuls of salt. She said to [the girl's father]: "Your daughter will eat that, and then she will drink." The father was not there. She handed the girl bowl after bowl of chickpeas—yallah, yallah, yallah. The next morning the girl soiled their bed [with excrement]. [The woman] said to him: "Now are you going to let your daughter spend the night with you?!"

This incident exemplifies the girl's lack of cleanliness, a theme which is typical of the Jewish Moroccan versions but which finds extreme expression in this one, where it involves the breaking of a taboo.

The second episode identified by Aarne and Thompson, "Magic Help," is also present in our versions, although it takes on a slightly different character. None of the possibilities offered by the international type fits in with our narrative, although there is a certain resemblance between our versions and that of the Brothers Grimm (1960:86–92). In the latter, the heroine's stepsisters ask the father to bring them clothes and ornaments when he sets out on a journey, whereas Aschenputtel asks only for the branch of a walnut tree. This she plants on the grave of her mother. Later, the tree gives her magical gifts. In the Jewish Moroccan versions, Smeda Rmeda desires walnuts, and it is similarly the father who brings home the object with supernatural powers. As in the Grimms' versions, the father gives the heroine a magical gift which ultimately enables her to leave his household. The walnuts themselves thus become associated with the end of the heroine's adolescence; in fact, nuts are generally associated with fertility in folk belief.

In our narratives, the magical helpers who emerge from the walnuts are male giant-demons. This contrasts with many European versions in which female characters function as saviors, whether in the form of fairies, fairy doves, or animal reincarnation of the dead mother. In some of the Jewish Moroccan versions the giant-demons have names, and in others they merit detailed description. The character who appears most frequently is Samsam Kamkam, or Samsam ben Kamkam, a giant "whose head is in the sky and

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

whose feet are in the water."[16] His appearance foreshadows a change in the fortunes of the heroine: as one narrator puts it, "Samsam Kamkam appeared, and her luck returned." Sometimes the giant is characterized by being all green or all red, colors suggestive of fertility or, in the case of the latter, the first sexual act. The giant-demons address Smeda Rmeda using a fixed formula: "What Madame wants me to do will be done." This motif—marvelous giants who inhabit tiny objects and come to the assistance of their owners—is widely distributed in Eastern narratives. In our version the giant-demons serve the heroine by sorting the seeds for her, bringing about her physical transformation by getting her beautiful clothes, transporting her to the palace, and when the ball is over, returning her home as requested.

The third episode of the international tale type, "Meeting the Prince," would better describe the Jewish Moroccan versions if entitled "Going to the Ball": Smeda Rmeda does not meet the prince at all, and none of the three options offered by the international type materializes in our narrative. The Jewish Moroccan versions reflect the Eastern custom of the segregation of men and women: at the ball, Smeda Rmeda is said to eat and drink her fill and listen to songs, but she does not meet the prince. That the prince falls in love with her is a function of the shoe he finds.

In some versions, a dramatic dimension is added to this discovery: the lost shoe falls into a well or a spring from which the king's horses drink. The horses refuse to drink because of the radiance emanating from the shoe, and this is how the prince discovers it. He falls in love with the owner of the shoe and announces that he will marry none but her. The motif of falling in love when finding a shoe is contained in the ancient Egyptian tale recounted by Strabo (1932:VIII, 93–94), in which an eagle grabs the sandal of the beautiful Rodophis as she is bathing, then flies to Memphis where the king is administering justice and drops it at his feet. The king so admires the exceptional beauty of the sandal that he instructs his servants to search all over Egypt for its owner so he can marry her. When the girl is found in the town of Naukratis, she is taken to Memphis and becomes the king's wife. Many researchers have pointed out that the shoe is an erotic object symbolizing sexual desire, inasmuch as it is a small receptacle that can be penetrated by a part of the body in a precise fit. Marian Cox notes that certain ethnic groups celebrated betrothal by putting on a shoe, while in central Europe people used to throw a shoe at newlyweds to ensure that their sex life would work out.[17] In Judaism, the shoe is also linked with sex: the ritual of the Halitzah (the removal of the sandal of the wife's brother-in-law) is a case in point. Jacob Nacht argues that the shoe symbolizes Woman, and that this explains the Halitzah ritual. According to Nacht, the shoe is further connected to relations between the sexes in that it symbolizes authority (1959:166–67).

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

"Recognition," the fourth narrative episode of the international tale type, occurs in our versions, too. As in Aarne and Thompson's variant IVa, Smeda Rmeda is recognized when she tries on the lost shoe. The shoe itself takes on several different shapes in the European versions: small and golden (Grimm), shiny and high-heeled (Basile), made of expensive satin (Scotland), a glass slipper (Perrault), etc. In our versions, the shoe is variously described as a slipper made of silver embroidered with gold thread, a beautiful green slipper or, more generally, "a precious slipper, such as nobody has ever seen before." The shoe in our narratives, as in most European versions, is not described as being particularly small.[18] The amputation of toes and heels performed by the stepsisters in the Grimms' tale is therefore a detail unnecessary to the Jewish Moroccan versions.

The fifth episode of the international type—"Marrying the Prince"—is equally present in our versions. With such an event at its conclusion, it is possible to regard the Cinderella narrative as a tale of maturation, moving from the mother's death, to the father's remarriage, to a period of adolescence, a time of degradation and humiliation, and finally, to the heroine's own marriage—the symbol of her maturity. But at this point we observe the difference between our narratives and the versions at the disposal of Aarne and Thompson: the Smeda Rmeda narratives do not end with marriage. Instead, injury is inflicted upon the heroine, with one of the stepsisters disguised as Smeda Rmeda.[19]

In our narratives, the stepmother sends one of her daughters, described as the ugliest of the lot and usually half blind,[20] on a visit to Smeda Rmeda. The stepsister pretends she wishes the heroine well. In three of our seven versions, the stepsister uses seven "blind" needles (needles without eyes) given to her by her mother to pierce Smeda's Rmeda's scalp while combing her hair. When the stepsister does this, Smeda Rmeda turns into a dove and flies away.[21] The stepsister then poses as the heroine, but the dove does not despair: she perches on a wall close to the prince's room and sings.

> My father gave me things,
> And my mother deceived me.
> The king's son took me,
> And he was kind to me,
> And he gave me things.
> Her daughter came and deceived me.
> Oh trees, be my witness.
> Weep over me!
> You stones, weep!
> Oh you son of the king,
> Weep for me at the gate of my palace.

When the dove finishes her song, the wall collapses. When this happens again, the king's son is mystified. He tars the wall and catches the dove.[22] As

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

he strokes the dove, the prince notices the needles. He pulls them out, and Smeda Rmeda is restored to her true form.[23]

In the remaining four versions, we are told at the beginning that Smeda Rmeda has a brother. Although this character disappears from the plot until after Smeda Rmeda's marriage, there is never any character in the folktale that does not perform some function, and indeed the brother performs his at this late stage. An Indian version of the Cinderella tale in which the heroine has a brother is cited by A. K. Ramanujan (1982:259–85); but whereas the presence of a brother in the Indian narrative allows the plot to move in the direction of incest, this theme is absent from our versions. The narrative function of the brother in the Jewish Moroccan versions is different, as will be shown below.

In these versions, the stepsister (who is blind in one eye) proposes to the pregnant heroine that they should go for a walk. When they come to the well from which lions and spirits drink or, alternately, to a room to which a taboo is attached, the stepsister pushes Smeda Rmeda into it, and then poses as the heroine. When the prince expresses astonishment at the girl's visual handicap, she claims that her brother put out her eye, and that as punishment he should be slaughtered and his flesh roasted. Meanwhile, Smeda Rmeda gives birth in the dark and perilous place. In these versions, the truth of the situation emerges as the brother and sister express their woe. This dialogue is in rhyme in every version:

> My sister, oh my sister,
> Oh daughter of our father and mother,
> The ovens are heating up
> And the knives are being sharpened.
>
> My brother, oh my brother,
> Oh son of our father and mother,
> I am caught between the lion and the lioness,
> And the king's sleeve is in my hands
> And the daughters of the women have betrayed me.

Initially, the prince does not understand the meaning of this dialogue, but when he discovers the truth, he rescues his wife and child. Many elements of AT 403 IV, "The Substituted Bride," find expression here, such as the entrapment of the heroine and the reference to the birth of her child (AT 403 IVa); the impersonation of the true bride (IVc);[24] and the reference to the brother and the attempt to hurt him (IVd).

The final episode in all our versions involves the punishment of the villains. As is typical of the folktale, punishment is severe. There is no refinement of the kind introduced by Perrault, who has Cinderella embrace her torturers in the true spirit of Christianity. In the Jewish Moroccan versions, the stepsister who posed as the prince's bride is put to death, her flesh

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

roasted and sent to her mother. The mother believes that her daughter has sent her a gift and invites friends to share the meal with her. When she finally discovers the severed head of her daughter, she bursts into tears and bewails her death.

The Jewish Moroccan tale type is thus characterized by these ten episodes, distinct from the five identified by Aarne and Thompson:

I. Instigated to murder by the woman who wants to marry her father, the heroine kills her mother.
II. The heroine convinces her father he should marry the other woman.
III. The heroine is persecuted (=AT 510 Ia,a_1).
IV The Magical help (=AT 510 II).
V. The heroine attends the ball (in contrast to AT 510 III).
VI. The heroine's true identity is recognized (=AT 510 IVa).
VII. The heroine marries the prince (=AT 510 V).
VIII. The heroine is injured and impersonated by the stepsister.
  (a) The heroine is turned into a dove.
  (b) The heroine is pushed into a well, or a room where dangers lurk.
IX. The heroine is saved.
  (a) As a result of her song, the needles are extracted and the heroine resumes her true identity.
  (b) As a result of the verses sung by the heroine and her brother, the heroine is rescued.
X. The villains are punished.

As in the international tale type, the Smeda Rmeda type outlined above adheres to the pattern of maturation. Here, however, this pattern has merited extension beyond the marriage of the heroine. These narratives begin with the murder of the mother, move on to the father's remarriage, Smeda Rmeda's heroine's marriage to the prince, her apparent death, the birth of her child, and then conclude with the punishment of the wicked women. In the Jewish Moroccan folk narrative, female maturity is achieved when the woman has a child. This is, moreover, the reward of the woman who repents and suffers. The conclusion of this tale is an expression of poetic justice: The woman who made a girl kill her mother discovers the dismembered body of her daughter.

Morphology

The attempt to establish the formal text of the folktale is best known from the work of Vladimir Propp (1968). His method differentiates between contents and form and establishes a division into two categories, one variable and the other fixed.[25] On the plane of each individual narrative, there are the characters and their actions, and these may change from one

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

narrative to another. The analytic level is the fixed formal level. On this level reside the narrative roles and their functions, which are abstract, general, and unchanging.

Basing my analysis on the seven versions in my possession, I have worked out the morphology of the Smeda Rmeda tale. I have located fifteen functions, of which three overlap (see below). Each function has its parallel in Propp's work. It must of course be borne in mind that we are dealing with a female-centered tale,[26] and that Propp's functions must therefore be reversed right from the beginning. In the tales studied by Propp, the narrative role of the "hero" (or the "subject" [Greimas and Courtes 1978:243–57]), faces the narrative role of a king's daughter or the king himself (the "object").[27] In our narrative, the subject is female (Smeda Rmeda) and the object is male (the prince). All the other narrative roles identified by Propp are present and filled by similar characters in each version.

Function I. *Trickery* (=Propp's Function VI: The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or his belongings.)
The villain (the future stepmother) instigates the heroine (Smeda Rmeda) to hurt her mother.

Function II. *Response* (=Propp's Function VII: The victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy.)
The heroine (Smeda Rmeda) acts on the advice tendered by the villain (the future stepmother).

Function III. *Injury* (=Propp's Function VIII: The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family.)
The stepmother causes injury to the mother by gaining control of the heroine (Smeda Rmeda) or directly causes injury to the heroine herself.

Function IV. *The recipient of the magical agent* (=Propp's Function XIV: The hero acquires the use of a magical agent.)
The donor (the father) gives the heroine the seven nuts in which the magical agent is located.

Function V. *Persecution* (=Propp's Function XXI: The hero is pursued.)
The villain (the stepmother) plots to injure the heroine, asking her to perform impossible tasks and forbidding her from attending the ball.

Function VI. *Rescue* (=Propp's Function XXII: Rescue of the hero from pursuit.)
The magical agent (the giants-demons) save the heroine from her persecutor (the stepmother) performing the task they are asked to fulfill and/or invalidating the prohibition.

Function VII. *Transfiguration* (=Propp's Function XXIX: The hero is given a new appearance.)
The magical agent gives the heroine a new appearance.

Function VIII. *Removal* (=Propp's Function XV: The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of the object of search.)
The magical agent carries the heroine to the palace.

Function IX. *Branding* (=Propp's Function XVII: The hero is branded.)
The heroine loses her slipper, which will serve to identify her.

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Function X. *Return* (=Propp's Function XXIII: The hero, unrecognized, arrives home.)
The as yet unrecognized heroine returns home.
Function XI. *Recognition* (=Propp's Function XVII: The hero is recognized.)
The heroine passes the shoe test and is recognized.
Function XII. *Wedding* (=Propp's Function XXXI: The hero is married and ascends the throne.)
The heroine marries the prince.
Repetition of Function III. *Injury* (=Propp's Function VIII)
The villain (the stepmother or the stepsister) inflicts suffering on the heroine (by either transforming her into a dove or abandoning her in a perilous place).
Function XIII. *Impersonation* (=Propp's Function XXIV: A false hero presents unfounded claims.)
The false heroine (the stepsister) poses as the king's wife and asks that her brother should be put to death.
Repetition of Function VI. *Rescue* (=Propp's Function XII)
The heroine is rescued by her brother and/or the prince.
Repetition of Function XI. *Recognition* (=Propp's Function XXVII)
The heroine is recognized as the true wife.
Function XIV. *Exposure* (=Propp's Function XXVIII: The false hero or the villain is exposed.)
Function XV. *Punishment* (=Propp's Function XXX: The villain is punished.)
The villain (the stepmother) and the false heroine (the stepsister) are punished.

Of the fifteen narrative functions in the Smeda Rmeda tale, three are duplicates (Functions III, VI, and XI [cf. Bremond 1970]).[28] As the formal structure outlined above illustrates, functions recur and recombine in the narrative plot. Formal analysis enables us to expose the formal constant underlying the Smeda Rmeda narratives. Analysis of additional texts may proceed according to this formal constant. Furthermore, formal analysis of the tale may be seen to reinforce the findings of typological analysis; like the repetition of narrative episodes, the repetition of narrative functions emphasizes those dimensions of the tale considered by the storyteller to be most significant.

Structure

Alan Dundes has offered a comparative study of Propp's approach to the folktale and that of Claude Lévi-Strauss. The central differentiation made by Dundes consists in Propp's method being identified as syntagmatic, that is, one that searches for linear structure in the narrative plot. In contrast, Dundes characterizes Lévi-Strauss's approach as paradigmatic, that is, one in which the narrative material is reorganized into structural oppositions which are used to build a model of the narrative as whole (Dundes 1968:xi–xii).[29]

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

David Pace has suggested that an even larger gap divides the approaches of Propp and Lévi-Strauss (1982:245). In his study of Propp's morphology, Lévi-Strauss differentiates his own methodology from that of Propp (1976:115; also Shiskoff 1976:271–76; Hendricks 1991:368–69). Lévi-Strauss argues that, unlike formalism, structuralism refuses to contrast the concrete (the variable contents of a tale) with the abstract (the fixed form of a tale), and does not posit the greater value of the latter. The details of the particular versions of various narrators, that is, the elements that vary from one narrative to another, are clearly outside the field of Propp's study (1968:112–13). They are part of the narration, as distinct from the narrative. Or, to use Saussure's terminology, they are *parole* as distinct from *langue*.

Lévi-Strauss, on the other hand, is aware of the importance of the different versions, regarding each as a system of substitutions relevant to analysis. Lévi-Strauss does not begin by working on a group of narratives. Instead, he focuses on a single narrative, or "myth," which he examines for oppositions between certain qualities, and then attempts to rebuild the network of oppositions[30] through which the local culture expresses itself. His analysis is always immanent: details are regarded as essential, contributing to a model of structural oppositions within a tale.

This difference in the methodologies of Propp and Lévi-Strauss produces different results (Pace 1982:250). Propp's work traces the formal interrelationships between elements in narratives. The morphology is worked out on the purely formal level and has no direct connection with the world. Theoretically at least, the analyses done according to Lévi-Strauss's approach seek to bridge the gap between the narrative and society:[31] the myth presents a microcosm of social relations. As the researcher focuses his attention on the concrete elements he must remain in touch with the cultural environment, and ethnographic details may be noted, even if they do not occur in the narrative itself.

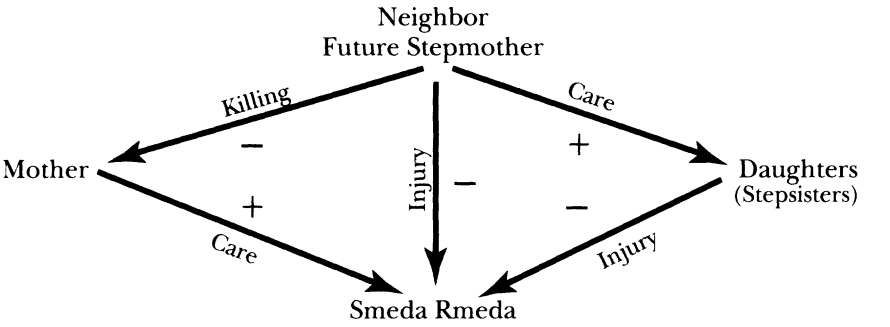
Using this structuralist approach, Pace has attempted an analysis of an American Cinderella narrative collected from his students. Although I have my reservations about certain aspects of Pace's analysis,[32] I find that certain interesting conclusions suggest themselves when this approach is applied to the Moroccan Jewish versions. In particular, I would like to examine the structure of Freha Hafutah's version of the Smeda Rmeda narrative.

The initial situation of the Smeda Rmeda tale involves two families:

A Complete Family +	————	− An Incomplete Family
(A family including a man)		(A family lacking a man)

Here, the incomplete family (the absence of a man) is understood to be in an inferior position vis-à-vis the complete one, and the situation must be remedied at all costs. The attempt to restore the family to completeness at the beginning of the story initiates a chain of oppositions between female characters:

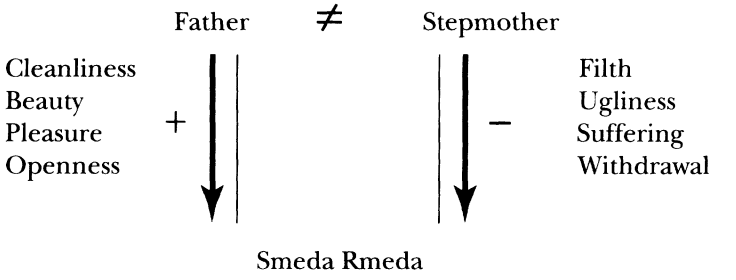
This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms



The network of oppositions revealed above highlights the centrality of blood relationships between women. In this narrative, there is loyalty only where there is blood relationship, and the absence of the bond of blood relationship results in enmity and hostility. Consequently, we understand to what extent the protagonist is at risk when she fails to be loyal to her mother. The mother's absence and the father's remarriage place the heroine in a family where non-consanguinity isolates her and alters her status. Smeda Rmeda is thus reduced to the level of a servant, sleeping in the cook-room or the bakery, left in filth, and forced to do menial work at the mercy of the other women in the household.

A series of acts of mediation leads up to the final, corrected situation. These acts make it quite clear that women can only be saved and redeemed when a male figure steps in. This being so, the woman must take the initiative and act so as to merit deliverance at the hands of a man. For example, the stepmother actively seeks a husband for herself, and the other women in the narrative are equally active figures. Women in this tale act because they realize that men must be *made* to act, and because it is men, and only men, who can save and redeem them.

Initially, an opposition is established between the actions of Smeda Rmeda's stepmother and her father, as indicated below:

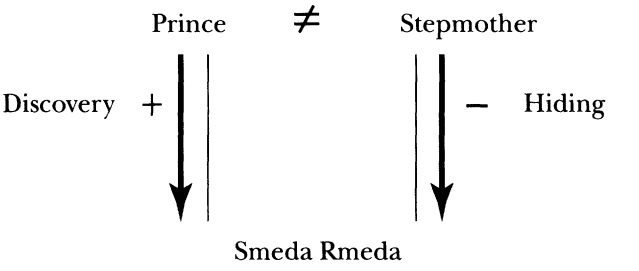


This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

The stepmother, who is liable to incur economic losses as well as loss of her daughters' preferential situation if Smeda Rmeda were to leave the household, tries to prevent the meeting of father and daughter. As Freha tells us, the father "rose and said to his wife: 'O my daughter, I will go to my daughter and ask her too what she wants.' 'Sit down, sit down,' said she to him, 'you just sit down. She is covered with soot and excrement all over, you have no reason to go and ask her.'" The stepmother thus tries to prevent the heroine from attending the ball, that is, from going out and from leaving the household altogether.

Although Smeda Rmeda knows the gifts to ask for (the nuts) and how to activate their magical properties, she clearly owes her initial, if temporary, deliverance to her father. The giant-demons which emerge from the walnuts, as all supernatural agents in Jewish Moroccan narratives, are also male. The father and magic help he provides enable the heroine to meet the prince (through the medium of the slipper) and to find a second state of deliverance.

As detailed earlier, the deliverance provided to Smeda Rmeda by her marriage to the prince concludes the European versions of the tale but is only temporary in the Jewish Moroccan versions. The second obstacle to Smeda Rmeda's happiness takes the form of an opposition between the actions of the prince and those of the stepmother:



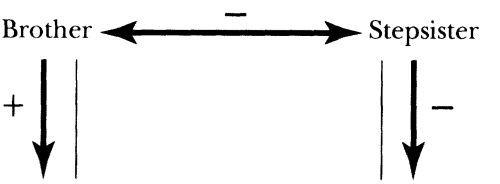
The older woman tries to hide the heroine from the prince, to arouse feelings of revulsion towards her by describing the filthy conditions in which she is living, and to prevent her from trying on the slipper. But Smeda Rmeda is saved from her stepmother by marriage to the prince, which offers a chance of social mobility and a change in status. Through marriage, the heroine is transformed from a girl into a woman; from filthy to clean; from ugly to beautiful; from the inhabitant of a cook-room to that of a palace; from endangered to protected.

As distinct from versions in which marriage represents final deliverance for the heroine, formal analysis demonstrates that, as our narratives continue, a certain narrative function is repeated: namely, that of a woman causing injury to another woman in order to usurp her place alongside her

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

husband. The stepmother instructs her daughter to find herself a husband at the expense of another woman, as the mother herself has done. To make up for what she lacks the stepsister "kills" Smeda Rmeda, symbolically, and occupies the position previously held by her. For the young characters, the situation reverts to that which existed earlier in the plot, and the opposition between a married woman and an unmarried woman is re-established. Early in the narrative, Smeda Rmeda violates the bond of female consanguinity, which represents the only loyalty possible between women. Here she once again trusts a woman who is not a blood relation (her stepsister), with similar results.

At this point in the narrative, Smeda Rmeda's father cannot help her because she has passed from his control to that of her husband, and the prince believes the stepsister to be his wife. Smeda Rmeda's stepsister has, at this point, appropriated the protection of marriage for herself and has successfully deprived the heroine of her previous sources of male help. The brother, who was only a child in the first part of the narrative, resurfaces at this point, when the heroine cannot be rescued by the other male characters. In the traditional family in the Magreb, the brother is in charge of his sisters and responsible for the honor of the family. He has the authority to punish them and it is his obligation to kill his sister if her deeds bring shame upon her family. But it is also his duty to deliver her from danger and to come to her aid when she is threatened by outsiders. Smeda Rmeda's brother is the only remaining man who can protect her,[33] and for this reason the stepsister tries to inflict injury upon him.



The stepsister realizes that, unless the heroine's brother is killed, her position as the prince's wife will be in jeopardy.

Smeda Rmeda is saved because her brother's remarks arouse her husband's suspicions. However, what finalizes the heroine's deliverance and assures her status is not her marriage but the birth of her son. In Middle Eastern society, a man is obligated as a blood relation to take care of his mother as long as she lives,[34] and thus the heroine's standing in the family is finally secure when she bears a son. The punishment of the villains at the end of the story is not only an expression of the insights acquired by the heroine regarding women who are not her blood relations, it is also an act of revenge

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

which forestalls any future attacks: as Smeda Rmeda gains a child, the stepmother is punished by the loss of one. The correction finds expression in the situation at the end of the narrative:

A Family + a child (A son) + ———— − A Family − a child (A daughter)

The reconstruction of oppositions and means of intermediation within the narrative enables us to understand the cultural language being employed by the narrator. We notice that the narrating society attaches importance to blood relationships, that men are perceived to possess the power to save and redeem women, and that such conditions shape the ways women relate to one another. In the Smeda Rmeda narrative, women are active, not victims of the "Cinderella syndrome" as it has been defined in feminist approaches to Western versions of the narrative. However, the activity of the women in the narrative does not undermine the prevailing patriarchal order of society but, conversely, affirms and reinforces it.

Structural analysis of this narrative supports the findings of contextual analysis of the storytelling event. Consider the declarative statement with which Freha prefaced her performance: "I am going to tell you a story my mother used to tell the family in order to teach the children to love their mother, avoid strange women trying to meddle with the lives of the family, and prefer family over friends." As suggested earlier, the addressees of Freha's message were her daughter and Avraham. At the time of the performance, the rest of the audience had no code with which to understand fully the significance of the tale. Freha's message to her daughter includes the principle of guarded relationships between women and preference for the mother and is reinforced by the structural level of the tale, as discussed above: a woman should be loyal to women who are blood relations. However, the message was also, and perhaps chiefly, addressed to the male member of the audience: it implied that he had the power to redeem and save the narrator's daughter. Freha may have feared that the narrative plot and its symbols did not convey her meaning powerfully enough, for she expresses it more explicitly in the concluding formula, when the imaginary apple was given to Avraham and the words "Perhaps he married her" were spoken.

As analysis of this storytelling event demonstrates, a performance situation can provide channels of communication (Bar-Itzhak 1981). Furthermore, the texts which are utilized in such performances may be analyzed structurally, helping us decode the messages of narratives in particular situations. As Bronislaw Malinowski has suggested, "cultural context" sheds light on "situational context" (1926); situational context may in turn demonstrate how the symbolic language of a culture is used in everyday life.

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Conclusion

Examination of the Smeda Rmeda narratives using several different research methods enables us to do an in-depth study, one enriched by the different perspectives employed. Moreover, working in this way we are able to discover the contribution made by various research methods to tasks of illuminating the layers of meaning embedded in a narrative and of locating points of contact between them. Typological analysis and the comparison of versions facilitates in-depth thematic study, which itself has a highly significant potential (see Hasan-Rokem 1988:73–87).

As typological analysis reveals, the five episodes identified by Aarne and Thompson's international tale type are insufficient for the study of the Smeda Rmeda narrative, which is characterized by ten distinct episodes. Analysis of the tale's morphology enabled us to discern the fifteen functions which characterize the narrative, a formal constant which provides a point of comparison for the analysis of additional recorded texts. The repetition of three of these functions may be regarded as a formal expression of the findings obtained by typological analysis, in which it was discovered that episodes VII and IX recur. Moreover, this repetition in the plot draws attention to a central and recurrent theme of this tale: namely, that of women inflicting injury on other women.

If the formal analysis focused on the text outside of its sociocultural context, the structural analysis enabled us to look at the "cultural language" in which this narrative was performed. Reconstruction of symbolic oppositions and means of intermediation within the narrative rendered a model of the system of relationships in the narrating culture: it demonstrated the importance of blood relations in the narrating society, the power of men to save or redeem women, and the means by which men and women interact. While typological analysis demonstrated that female characters in this narrative are active, it was the structural analysis which showed that their activity serves to confirm and reinforce the patriarchal social order: women act in order to secure a man, because only a man can give them social standing in the sociocultural context.

Finally, close study of the storytelling event in which Freha Hafutah narrated the Smeda Rmeda tale indicated that narratives provide important channels of communication. Also, it demonstrated a correspondence between the findings of structural and contextual approaches, which may clarify and reinforce one another. The structural analysis of the text provided the tools which enable us to decode the narrator's intended message, while the "situational context" points to the use of the cultural language of the narrating society in the conduct of everyday life.

University of Haifa

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Notes

I first started working on the Smeda Rmeda narrative when I collaborated with Aliza Shenhar on the Shlomi Project (see Shenhar and Bar-Itzhak 1982:54–55; Bar-Itzhak and Shenhar 1993:89–93). An earlier version of this paper was published in Hebrew in Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore 13–14, dedicated to Dov Noy (1991–92:323–48). I would like to thank Dan Ben-Amos, Mary Ellen Brown, and Jennifer Schacker-Mill for their suggestions for the improvement of the manuscript.

1. This narrative is stored in the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA No. 16445) and has previously been published (Shenhar and Bar-Itzhak 1982: 44–49).
2. The narrator is addressing the women to whom she is telling the tale.
3. A dish cooked with semolina and milk and served with butter.
4. "Kappara" is an expiatory sacrifice: "I am prepared to let my life be an expiatory sacrifice for you," would be an expression of love.
5. This phrase is a typical connector in Jewish Moroccan storytelling.
6. That is to say, the whole population came, even the poorest and the ugliest.
7. A gigantic demon, sometimes called Samsam ben Kamkam, usually described as "having his head in the sky and his feet in the water."
8. The narrator blesses the listeners.
9. I would like to thank Research Assistants Penina Peri and Yehuda Peretz, who helped to translate the narratives into Hebrew.
10. However, it should be noted that there is one Judeo-Moroccan narrative in the IFA (No. 6859, collected by Billy Kimchi from Esther Alzara Arpood of Ma'alot) which belongs to Cox's Types B and C, Rooth's Type B1, and AT 510B ("The Golden Dress, the Money and the Stars"). In this version, the character of Smeda Rmeda is not mentioned, and, as in the international type, the protagonist is a princess.
11. A recording of this version may be found in the IFA (No. 8595).
12. This version and a discussion of it are included in *Cinderella: A Folklore Casebook* (Dundes 1982: 3-13).
13. Apart from the Moroccan narratives, there are 16 Jewish parallels from Islamic countries in the IFA: Tunis (2), Turkey (1), Lebanon (1), Sephardic Israeli (1), Yemen (2), Iraqi Kurdistan (2), Persian Kurdistan (2), Iraq (1), Bukhara (3), Afghanistan (1).
14. The version collected by Margaret Mills in Iran, and which she claims is characteristic of both Iran and Afghanistan, contains narrative stages similar to those found in the Jewish Moroccan versions: an opportunistic teacher at a religious school questions one of her students, the daughter of a trader, about her family's financial status. When the widowed teacher discovers that the family is well-off, she asks the girl what provisions they have at home. The girl tells her they have vinegar, whereupon the widow convinces her student of her good intentions and that the girl's mother is wicked. She then suggests that the girl should ask her mother to get her some vinegar, and that she should push her mother into the vessel in which the vinegar is stored and close it. The girl does so, and after some time the father marries the schoolteacher. When the teacher has a daughter of her own, she begins to mistreat her stepdaughter (1982: 185-89).

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

15. According to my informants, the word 'Smeda' means a fine semolina, used to prepare kouskous. 'Rmeda' derives from the word 'Rmad' meaning ashes.

16. According to my informants, this is a frightful demon. 'Samsam' means odorous, and 'Kamkam' means eating or devouring. Although the name of this demon is applied to persons who inspire fear, Smeda Rmeda controls the demon, and therefore he serves her.

17. Many proverbs compare a man who moves from one woman to another to a person who changes shoes or socks frequently (Bettelheim 1977:267–71).

18. The narrative detail of the small shoe is believed to be of Oriental origin (cf. Waley 1947).

19. This is a variation of AT 403 IV, "The Substituted Bride," as discussed later in this essay.

20. The blindness of this stepsister recalls the Grimms' version, which concludes with the punishment of the stepsisters by the birds pecking out their eyes.

21. Smeda Rmeda's transformation into a dove in these versions recalls the doves and fairy-doves in some of the European versions of the tale.

22. A comparable motif occurs in the Grimms' version, where tar is used to catch Aschenputtel as she attempts to leave the party before the wedding.

23. This is Motif D154.1 (a human being is turned into a dove), and a variation of AT 405, "Jorinde and Joringel" (in which a girl is magically transformed into a bird, and a young man uses a spell to restore her to her true form).

24. Also indexed as Motif K1911 (the false bride dresses as the true bride, occupies her place without the bridegroom's knowledge, and harms the bride).

25. His work contributed to the development of the surface structure in narrative grammar. In "transformational-generative grammar" surface structure is the abstract formulation of the organization of the observable sentence. Literary scholars interested in how the infinite variety of stories may be generated from a limited number of basic structures adopted this terminology.

26. Female tales have been treated by Ilana Dan (1977: 13–30) and Heda Jason (1989:79–97), among others.

27. The role of the helper in Greimas' work includes Propp's agent and donor. As distinct from Propp, Greimas regards the king's daughter as a separate role—the object in his scheme, and the compound of subject-object links up with the essence "to wish." The wish of the subject to acquire the object finds expression on the level of the narrative function in the category of the quest.

28. Bremond notes such instances of duplication. As with Propp, the function is the basic unit for Bremond, although the latter argues that every three functions combine to form a "sequence" of potential, process, and outcome. Each sequence opens two alternatives, two directions the story can take. Such elementary sequences in turn combine to form complex sequences (Bremond 1970:247–76).

29. Whereas the surface structure of the story is syntagmatic, i.e., governed by temporal and causal principles, the deep structure is paradigmatic, based on static logical relations among the elements.

30. His study of myth assumes that the structure underlying every myth is that of a four-term homology, correlating one pair of opposed mythemes with another (Lévi-Strauss 1963:206–31).

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

31. An innovative approach to the relation of reality and art has been suggested by Galit Hasan-Rokem (1988:75).

32. As Dundes has pointed out, Pace identifies the Cinderella narrative as a "myth" (Dundes 1982:246). Moreover, it is not clear whether Pace is referring to each of his students' versions as an individual "text," or whether he considers them collectively as a single "text."

33. On the subject of male protection of the female family members, see Dundes (1978:258–59).

34. The centrality of the mother-son relationship in Middle Eastern society has been treated in detail by Dundes (1978:288–89).

References Cited

Aarne, Antti, and Stith Thompson
1961 *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography.* Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.

Bar-Itzhak, Haya
1982 "Overt and Covert Transmission in a Story-telling Event." *Proceedings of the 8th World Congress of Jewish Studies,* IV:153–59. Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies.

Bar-Itzhak, Haya, and Aliza Shenhar
1993 *Jewish Moroccan Folk Narratives from Israel.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Bauman, Richard
1986 *Story, Performance, and Event: Contextual Studies in Oral Narrative.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bettelheim, Bruno
1977 *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairytales.* New York: Vintage Books.

Bremond, Claude
1970 "Morphology of the French Folktale." *Semiotica* 2: 247–76.

Cox, Marian Roalfe
1893 *Cinderella.* London: David Nutt.

Dan, Ilana
1977 "The Innocent Persecuted Heroine: An Attempt at a Model for the Surface Level of the Narrative Structure of the Female Fairy Tale." In *Patterns in Oral Literature,* ed. Heda Jason and Dmitri Segal, 13–30. Copenhagen: The Conference on Structure in Oral Literature.

Dundes, Alan
1968 "Introduction to the Second Edition." In *Morphology of the Folktale,* Vladimir Propp, xi–xii. Austin: University of Texas Press.
1978 "The Hero Pattern and the Life of Jesus." In *Essays in Folkloristics.* Meerut: Folklore Institute.
1982 *Cinderella: A Folklore Casebook.*, ed. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Fine, Elizabeth C.
1984 *The Folklore Text: From Performance to Print.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Greimas, Algirdas Julien, and Joseph Courtes
1978 "Cendrillon va au Bal: Les Roles et les Figures dans la Litterature Orale Francaise". In *Systèmes de Signes: Textes Réunis en Hommage a Germaine Dieterlen*, 243–57. Paris: Hermann.
Grimm, Jacob, and Wilhelm Grimm
1960 *The Grimms' German Folktales*, ed. Francis P. Magoun, Jr., and trans. Alexander H. Krappe. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
Hasan-Rokem, Galit
1988 "The Snake at the Wedding." *ARV: Scandinavian Yearbook of Folklore* 44: 73–87. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell.
Hendricks, William O.
1991 "Semiotics and Narrative." In *Recent Developments in Theory and History: The Semiotic Web* 1990: 365–88. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
Jason, Heda
1989 "The Fairy Tale of the Active Heroine: An Outline for Discussion." In *Le Conte, pourquoi? comment?: Actes des Journées d'Etudes en Litterature Orale, Paris 23-26 Mars 1982*, ed. Genevieve Calame-Griaule, Veronika Gorog-Karady, and Michele Chiche, 79–93. Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.
Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara
1975 "The Parable in Context." In *Folklore: Performance and Communication*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth Goldstein, 106–30. The Hague: Mouton.
Lévi-Strauss, Claude
1963 "The Structural Study of Myth." In *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoeph. New York: Basic Books.
1976 "Structure and Form: Reflections on a Work by Vladimir Propp." In *Structural Anthropology* II:323–348. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1926. *Myth in Primitive Psychology.* New York: W. W. Norton and Co.
Mills, Margaret A.
1982 "A Cinderella Variant in the Context of Muslim Women's Ritual." In *Cinderella: A Folklore Casebook*, ed. Alan Dundes, 185–89. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.
Nacht, Jacob.
1959 *The Symbols of Women in Ancient Hebrew Literature, Modern Hebrew Literature and World Literature.* Tel Aviv. Published privately.
Pace, David.
1982 "Beyond Morphology: Lévi-Strauss and the Analysis of Folktales." In *Cinderella: A Folklore Casebook*, ed. Alan Dundes, 245–58. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.
Perrault, Charles
[1697] 1961 *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passe: Avec des Moralites.* Paris: Marpon and Flammarion.

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Propp, Vladimir
1968 *Morphology of the Folktale.* Austin: University of Texas Press.
Ramanujan, A. K.
1982 "Hanchi: A Kannada Cinderella." In *Cinderella: A Folklore Casebook,* ed. Alan Dundes, 259–75. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.
Rooth, Anna Brigitta
1951 *The Cinderella Cycle.* Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup.
Shenhar, Aliza, and Haya Bar-Itzhak
1982 *Folktales From Shlomi.* Haifa: Haifa University Press.
Shishkoff, Serge
1976 "The Structure of Fairytales: Propp vs. Lévi-Strauss." *Dispositio* 1: 271–76.
Strabo
1932 *The Geography of Strabo.* Loeb Classical Library, Vol. VIII. London: Heinemann.
Waley, Arthur
1947 "The Chinese Cinderella Story." *Folk-Lore* 58:226–38.

This content downloaded from 128.143.23.241 on Wed, 22 Jun 2016 16:04:57 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms